

# THE OXHILL NEWS



NO. 423  
FEBRUARY 2010

## MOBILE LIBRARY

The library van will continue to visit Oxhill on Tuesdays, stopping at the Village Hall at 10 a.m. and staying there for 30 minutes.

In February the van will visit us on Tuesday 16th.

You can renew books between van visits by calling 01926 851031, or online at [www.Warwickshire.gov.uk/wild](http://www.Warwickshire.gov.uk/wild).

*Editor*

## REFUSE COLLECTIONS

Back to normal, collections will be made in February as follows:

Tuesday 2nd	Recycling Blue and Green bins
Tuesday 9th	Landfill Grey bin
Tuesday 16th	Recycling Blue and Green bins
Tuesday 22rd	Landfill Grey bin

*Editor*

## TWO TIMELY REMINDERS

It's that time of year again!

Firstly, if you don't live within the parish of Oxhill (and **only** if you don't) please would you let me have your subscription of £3 for the next year's issues of the News.

And secondly may I remind you that the Editorship is not a job for life, so if any of you would like to take it over **please** make yourself known. I will not be offended. No, really, I mean it. I will **not** be offended!

*George*

## MARCH ISSUE

Please could I have all copy for the March issue by Midnight on **Sunday, 21st February**? If you normally prepare your material using a computer, it would make my life easier if you could submit your offering in electronic form, though paper is, of course, fine. My 'official' e-mail address is **news-editor@oxhill.org.uk** if you wish to send me stuff that way.

*George Adams, 680286*

## COVER PICTURES

Oxhill in the snow yet again, this time taken from my bedroom and bathroom windows. I just liked them.

*Editor*

## JOY BLOXHAM, 1921 - 2010

The death of Joy Bloxham on the evening of the fifteenth of January was the sad departure of a long-term resident of this village. We send our sympathy to Bert and Heather at this time.

Joy was born in Tadmorton on 12th July 1921 but spent most of her life before she married Bert, at Burdrop. She came to Oxhill in 1944 to live in No 1 Whatcote Road as the new bride of Bert Bloxham after their marriage on 6th May.

Joy was an active member of the Church, serving in the choir and on the P.C.C for many years. Joy's Jumble sale was an annual landmark in the local calendar – a day of hard work enjoyed by all who were involved in any way and a successful fund-raiser for the Church.

When Joy retired from working at Woolworths she busied herself, with Bert and Heather, with a paper round and with British Legion work until frailty finally forced her retirement from both.

Joy was a friend to many in Oxhill, always quick to offer help to anyone in need, fetching prescriptions and taking villagers to the doctor's surgery, the post office or hospital appointments.

For many years her love of dancing took her to Banbury and the surrounding villages, and she loyally supported the Good Companions, greatly enjoying their meetings and outings.

Joy had a keen interest in everything that occurred in the locality and her extensive knowledge of the area and local families was very well known.

She was a devoted wife and mother; her home was always a welcoming place for anyone in need and when you called you were always sure of a warm welcome.

God bless you, Joy, we will all miss you.

## ENA DAY

Bill Day and family would like to thank everyone for their support since Ena passed away suddenly on January 11th 2010. Ena so appreciated all the friendship and help since she moved to Oxhill with Bill in 1979. They were married for 69 years. During her 30 years here, she was sub postmistress and became a member of both Oxhill Methodist church and the WI.

Her sunny, sweet nature was enjoyed by all who knew her. A special thanks go to Lilian for her friendship over the years and to her and her team for preparing the food following the funeral on January 21st.

Ena will be truly missed by all her family, friends and the community.

# ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, OXHILL

## SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

All are warmly welcome

Sunday 7th	Sexagesima	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion (ML)
Sunday 14th	Quinquagesima	3.30 p.m.	Evensong (ML)
Wednesday 17th	Ash Wednesday	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion at Brailes
		10.30 a.m.	at Tysoe
Sunday 21st	Lent I	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion (ML)
Sunday 28th	Lent II	9.30 a.m.	Family Service (NM)

Deanery Services - every Tuesday in Lent - flyers in Church

*For details of other services in the Benefice please see the list in Church or phone the clergy*

## SHIPSTON DEANERY SYNOD

May I wish everyone a very happy and blessed New Year, trusting in God's future and confident that whatever it may bring He will be with us.

### Deanery Synod

The next Deanery Synod is on February 2nd (note this is a change of date) at St. Edmund's, Shipston. The evening will begin with a 'bring and share' supper at 7.00pm, followed by a short Eucharist for Candlemas at 7.30 p.m. (celebrant David Thurburn-Huelin) before the business of the Synod. We will be welcoming Revd. Canon Christopher Lamb as our main speaker, who will be talking about 'Living under Occupation in Jerusalem'.

### Lent Services

Once again we look forward to welcoming everyone to our series of Lent services, all on Tuesday evenings. This year we will start at 7.30 p.m. The theme this year is 'The Christian Difference', and venues will be:

February 23rd	Shipston	A love that shows
March 2nd	Cherington	An allegiance that shows
March 9th	Halford	A joy that shows
March 16th	Sutton-under-Brailes	A concern that shows
March 23rd	Stretton-on-Fosse	A faith that shows
March 30th	Tysoe	Eucharist of Holy Week, with Bishop Christopher

The series is based upon the book 'Spot the Difference', by Nick Fawcett, published by Kevin Mayhew. Copies cost £6.99 from Christian bookshops or, hopefully, Robinson Goss.

*Jill Tucker, Rural Dean*

## DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

We are all currently looking at Budget Proposals for next financial year and I will continue to press for our current services to be maintained and improved. In addition I am pressing for the Community Grants to be re-introduced, as I know that many village organisations rely on support from Parish Council AND District Council when applying for national grants.

I am also strongly supportive of a new Community Transport initiative which will see a low flat rate fare for evening journeys into and home from Stratford and Leamington. Since becoming a Councillor I have had many conversations with young people about the high cost of bus fares, so it is hoped that this will make a difference. I have also been very concerned about the closure of the District Council Office in Shipston and at a meeting earlier this week was pleased to hear that the Council are encouraging the Shipston Town Management to come up with a business plan to share the premises and make its operation viable.

Recently I have been happy to help with planning, parking and housing issues across the villages. I have also continued to work with the Better Healthcare Programme in Banbury, where negotiations are at a critical stage to maintain and indeed improve the current services at The Horton General. There must be about 15,000 in South Warwickshire, for whom The Horton is their closest hospital. I have also spent a great deal of time at Tysoe school recently, where as a Governor, I am involved in the appointment of a new head teacher, following the retirement of Mr Taylor, a hard act to follow! I also enjoyed immensely the School Carol Service and Christmas Story. Christmas week also saw me enjoying a Christmas meal with Shipston Age Concern, another committee on which I serve. Weekly lunch clubs are held at Stour Court and latterly Rainbow Fields in Shipston. We are currently looking for a cook for Thursdays at Rainbow Fields, which is a voluntary position, but travelling expenses are paid. So if you know of a willing volunteer let me know. Outings are also organised, as is a nail-clipping service.

I am in regular contact with all parish councils and meetings, especially over Planning applications. I often wish that applicants would discuss their proposals with neighbours and parish councils before submitting them, as it would often save a lot of time and trouble. My year as Council Chairman continues as one of meeting many different groups across the District. Be assured this will not deter me from continuing to work on your behalf.

*Gill Roache, 01295 680309*

## PIANO – AVAILABLE FREE TO A GOOD HOME

There is an upright Piano in the Village Hall available free to anyone who is willing to collect it by arrangement with a committee member. It is currently not in 'tune' albeit I believe that it has been in the past but the wide temperature fluctuations in the Hall mean that it is impossible to keep it in tune.

Derek Harbour

## NATURE NOTES

February 2nd is Candlemas “St Mary’s Feast of the Candles” when lights and candles are blessed in churches and candlelit services and processions are held. Also by this date it is now deemed light enough within the house to do most ‘inside work’ without candles, so alas no more excuses for not doing our housework! Fine weather on this day is to be feared since it shows that the worst of the winter is still to come. Let’s hope not as we certainly don’t want any more snow since it is so hard on our wildlife, especially the wild bird population. A big thank you to the many in Oxhill who keep a constant supply of food on their bird tables. Most wild birds need to take in 30 – 40% of their body weight per day in food in order to survive the bitterly cold nights.

If you were stuck at home, the blanket of snow provided a perfect backdrop for bird watching. We provided five “food stations” with varying types of food for the birds and more or less at any one moment we could see sparrows, dunnocks, robins, blackbirds, chaffinch, greenfinch, goldfinch, wren, song thrush, starlings, blue tits, great tits, pied wagtail, and every day from dawn till dusk, a fieldfare. The fieldfare, together with the robin, was the first bird in the garden at first light. It vigorously guarded its food station, which was cut apples we had put down for it. It protected this patch quite violently at times, on one occasion having a spectacular aerial fight with another fieldfare. It would be nearly dark and all the other birds had gone to roost, but our fieldfare would still be there pecking away at the apples. Other regular visitors during the day were a pair of woodpigeon, a large cock pheasant, great spotted woodpecker, collared doves, a redwing (rarely seen in gardens), jackdaws, and occasional crows and magpies, also not forgetting the marauding band of long-tailed tits (bum barrels!) numbering up to eleven on one day. Another garden rarity I saw a couple of times was a brambling (so a total of 24 species). It is the first time I have seen a brambling in our garden. This very handsome finch is a winter visitor to Britain from Northern Europe. It is sometimes referred to as a northern chaffinch, Bramble finch, or mountain finch. These migrant bramblings are often seen in the company of chaffinches (as ours was) during the winter months. They differ from the chaffinch in that they have an unusual orange flush to the breast and shoulders. In the summer the male’s head and back are blackish, but in the winter these parts have pale feather tips so appear much more grey-black. They also have striking pale whitish wing bars and a white rump. The famous ornithologist J A Baker wrote this rather poetic description: His underparts are orange and white; glowing orange, like a sunset on silver scales of birch bark. Normally a bird of mainly woodland and farmland, the hard weather will bring them into gardens. They stay until March/April, so keep a look out for them.

Of course February sees not only the birds starting to prepare for breeding and corvids already nesting, but also the first flowers of spring will start to push through. Traditionally February 4 sees the blooming of snowdrops, also called Candlemas bells, February fair maids, Snowbells and Snowpiercers.

On 5th February 1953 the rationing of sweets and chocolate was finally abolished after ten years. During the latter half of WWII the weekly ration of sweets and chocolate was a mere 2oz per person, increased to a more generous 6oz in the post-war years. Apparently the shops sold out of sweets and chocolate on that day.

*The Confection made of Cacao called Chocolate or Chocoletto, which may be had in divers places in London at reasonable rates, is of wonderful efficacy for the procreation of children: for it not only vehemently incites to Venus, but causeth Conception in women .... And besides that it preserves health, for it makes such as take it often to become fat and corpulent, fair and amiable*

William Coles "Adam in Eden" 1657

*Grenville Moore*

## GARDEN CLUB

We were entertained by an ardent local bee keeper this month, Peter Hepworth, who has been keeping bees for around 40 years. He said lately bee numbers had been reducing and they are fundamental to keeping our food chain going. However, the number of registered bee keepers in the Warwickshire area has risen by approx 25% and courses are available to anyone interested in taking up this hobby. He showed us much of the equipment needed - the hive, of course, the smoke box, the attire to wear etc. The benefits which could accrue to keepers includes honey, candles, wax polish, mead, home made wines/beers and the possibility of using honey for medicinal purposes. Peter described the different honeys eg runny, cream and granulated. The earliest bee keepers were monks but today anyone could participate if they were keen enough. Peter described the different bees e.g. the queen, the workers and the drones and the life cycle that takes place and how and why they swarm and much, much more. Many thanks to Peter for imparting his knowledge to us.

We will be having a talk on "Tudor Gardens" by Roger Pringle on 18th February and then of course our AGM on 18th March when all will be welcome, existing members and new.

*Sue Hedley*

## INTRODUCTION TO BEEKEEPING

Shipston Beekeepers are holding an "Introduction to Beekeeping" day on Saturday 13th March at the Old Free School, Brailes. The day will deal with the basics of beekeeping for the complete beginner or those with very limited experience of this craft.

Arrive at 09.30 for coffee prior to a prompt 10.00 start. Refreshments and a light lunch are included in the day's price of £10. The event is scheduled to finish at 15.00 approx.

Contact Douglas Nethercleft on 01295 680041 or [djn0001@aol.com](mailto:djn0001@aol.com) to book your place. Numbers are limited.

## OWLS

A big thank you to everyone who returned their wildlife surveys. Our village has approximately 120 residential households, which includes a variety of house and garden types, and I received 19 returns, which is a 15% response. Now anyone in marketing will tell you that this is a fantastic response, and these returns come from all parts of the village, so I think we can take this as a very good average and guide to what we have in the village.

OWLS was run from July to the end of October and consisted of a small list (as per Warwickshire Nature) of the more common species. 28% of people supplied extra observations. Of the total who replied, 72% wish to take part in a more detailed survey, and a bit of a surprise, 66% have ponds, which is 12 ponds which does not include the large double pond belonging to John Baker. If you wish to take part in a detailed survey this year, but did not for whatever reason send a survey back, please contact any member of OWLS.

Although we have a good number of ponds, one of the most worrying things is that there were only three sightings of frogs and three of toads. Earlier in the year people reported having no frogspawn in their ponds. Some years ago during the breeding season we would have a procession of toads coming up Back Lane, but for some reason we have had a dramatic decrease in frogs and toads over the last few years.

During 2009 83% of those who responded reported seeing hedgehogs and up to two or three individuals in more than one garden. Let's hope they have survived the cold spell. Although nationally house sparrows are declining, 77% have them in their gardens, and of those 85% reported seeing an average of seven to eight at any one time, which suggests many of us have a breeding colony. Also, good news, 77% of respondents have large bumblebees. We really have to encourage these (details to follow).

Other findings include:

50%	have song thrush
77%	had Peacock butterflies
72%	had Red Admiral butterflies
66%	of gardens have a long/branch pile
50%	of gardens have a long grass area
77%	have taller shrubs or hedges
38%	have bird boxes
65%	have bee/insect boxes
44%	use only peat-free compost
42%	only use environmentally friendly slug pellets

We saw a total of 52 species of birds and 20 species of butterflies and moths.



We had great-crested newts, common newts, grass snakes, fox, muntjac, grey squirrels, and roe deer, not forgetting the five species of bat discovered on our bat walk.

I am still in the process of collating all the information so I will post a full list of what we all saw on the new OWLS web site [www.oxhill-owls.org.uk](http://www.oxhill-owls.org.uk).

January this year sees the launch of the International Year of Biodiversity. During this year OWLS hope to tackle the following:

- 1) Circulating a detailed survey to all those who volunteered to take part.
- 2) Constructing and installing swallow/owl/kestrel bird boxes.
- 3) Surveying areas in and around the village for wild flowers with the object of creating wildflower areas.
- 4) Surveying ponds in and around the village.
- 5) Circulating "How to Create a Wildlife Area" details to every household.
- 6) 2010 Photographic Exhibition – start 'snapping' now.
- 7) A night time 'Moth Watch'.

We cannot do all this by ourselves – we still need extra volunteers for future work parties, so please sign up.

Don't forget the RSPB bird count on 30 January 2010.

*Grenville Moore*

## VICARAGE NOTES

### Thought for the month

My predecessor wrote 100 years ago: "if our Christianity is to be worth the name, and our churchmanship to be real and assume a practical shape, then without a doubt, we do need these quieter times of prayer." The Rev. Fred Garrard of Brailles was looking towards Lent and reminding his readers that the foundation for a necessarily active faith was prayerful reflection.

As we come to terms with the earthquake that has wreaked such havoc in Haiti, there has been an outpouring of generous support for the Disasters Emergency Committee, which includes the Red Cross, Christian Aid and Oxfam in the 13 charities that are its members. There will, of course, be the huge challenge of co-ordinating relief.

May our inward faith or philosophy be always full of compassion and a desire for the common good!

God bless,

*Nicholas Morgan 01608 685230*

## WEEKDAY WALKERS

### Friday 12th February

This is a 4 mile circular walk from Balscote with little ascent; because of the damp ground most of this walk is on quiet roads. The walk will start and finish at "The Butchers Arms" Balscote. We will leave Oxhill at 10:15 a.m.

### Friday 26th February

This is a 4¼ mile circular walk from Ilmington with 570 feet of ascent giving weather permitting, excellent views. The walk will start and finish at "The Red Lion" Ilmington. We will leave Oxhill at 9:45 a.m.

Please contact Jim Saxton on 01295 680613 or mail to [saxton@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:saxton@tiscali.co.uk) before the Thursday prior to the walk.

## SDC OFFICE IN SHIPSTON

*The following information has reached us concerning the proposed closure of Stratford Offices in Shipston. It seems to give hope for the future. Ed.*

Further to my e-mail to you requesting your assistance with lobbying Stratford District Council with regard to the above, we are delighted to tell you that at the SDC Cabinet Meeting on Monday, councillors accepted the proposal from Shipston Town Management Partnership to lease the building and continue to provide "One Stop Shop" services to residents of Shipston and South Warwickshire.

We have meetings with council officers next week to start to work on the detailed planning and will advise you once the scope of those services and the re-opening of the office will be effective.

*Bob Tolley, Director, Shipston Town Management Partnership*

## AT THE PEACOCK

February starts with two simultaneous national weeks, and the Peacock will be celebrating both of them. From the second to the fifth traditional pies will be offered, to go with National Pie Week, whilst on Tuesday 2nd guest speakers will be present to take part in National Story Telling Week. If you have the gift of the gab you can join in yourself.

Quiz night is Sunday 7th and Ed Fox will be the guest chef on Monday 8th. There will be another guest chef night on Monday 22nd. The village coffee morning and lunch will be on the first and third Wednesdays as usual. Monday 15th is Collop Monday, when by tradition slices of bacon were eaten to use them up before Lent began. The Peacock proposes to serve ham, eggs and chips as a modern version. The following day is the Chinese New Year and, as last year, a Chinese buffet will be served.

## OXHILL VILLAGE HALL

### **Indian Meal – Friday 5th March**

Our ever popular Indian Meal evening is set to happen on Friday 5th March, starting at 7.30 for an 8 o'clock sharp meal. We will have starters and a selection of delectable curries to tickle your taste buds followed by a desert and all for the recession busting price of £10 per ticket.

This event is often over-subscribed and Angela Emmerson, 680565, who is selling the tickets, tells me that they are selling fast and only a few remain.

### **Spring Progressive Supper**

Plans are being drawn up for another Progressive Supper in the Spring. The outline of the evening is that tickets will be available for you to buy to enjoy a fabulous evening starting with drinks at the Village Hall followed by a Starter at one of the houses in the Village, followed by a Main course in another house and desert or cheese and biscuits back at the Village Hall. If you would rather be a 'host' for either a 'Starter' or a 'Main Meal' please contact Tracey Hackett (680366)

If you are new to the Village, this is a great opportunity to meet new people and join in what is always a popular event – more details next month.

### **AGM**

The Village Hall Committee AGM will be coming up in April and we know that a few of our long-serving colleagues will want to stand down having made a huge contribution. Consequently there will be opportunities for new faces and new ideas to influence the way that the Village Hall is run and the sort of event that is available. Watch out for the date and start to think if and how you might contribute.

*Derek Harbour*

## OXHILL FESTIVAL CHOIR

Apologies for the late inclusion of this entry – there appears to be an e-mail problem.

Thank you everyone for a splendid performance at the Carol Service last month. Every year I worry if we will be desperately short in one part, or indeed if enough people will turn up to produce a half decent choir, and every year everyone rallies themselves to attend the rehearsals and produce a wonderful evening.

Thanks must go in particular this year to George for his magnificent solo and for composing one of our carols, to Joyce and Philippa for guiding us expertly through three new carols and to Colin and Jill for allowing us to use the Old Chapel for our rehearsals – much appreciated in the cold weather.

Thank you everyone for your superb effort. See you again next year!

*Gaynor Van Dijk*

[I am pleased to say that the e-mail problems mentioned by Gaynor seem to be sorted now. The problem was a major server crash at our ISP which left the News, and Gwyn and myself, bereft of e-mails for a week. It seemed longer at the time. Ed]

## STOUR FLOOD DEFENCE EQUIPMENT EXHIBITION

Whilst the flooding of July 2007 is a matter of history, it is still very fresh in the minds of the countless residents and businesses located along the River Stour and other areas of Warwickshire who were so badly affected.

Stratford District Council have made available funds from a government grant to assist, in part, property owners with the purchase and installation of flood defence equipment.

The difficulty is that many of owners are unaware of the solutions that exist which is why Shipston Town Management Partnership, on behalf of Shipston Town Council, are organising an exhibition to take place at Shipston High School, Darlingscote Road, Shipston-on-Stour on Saturday 6th February 2010 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The exhibition has attracted companies from throughout the UK which manufacture and distribute a range of equipment and solutions for the prevention of damage to property caused by flooding who will give advice on flood prevention and property protection.

Admittance to the exhibition will be free of charge.

For further information please contact Bob Tolley on 01608 664690

## VEHICLE CRIME

Please be aware that over recent nights thieves have been actively at work in Tredington, Ilmington, Shipston, Tysoe, Upper and Lower Brailes and Long Compton.

Vehicles in all of these villages have been attacked and items including a wallet, a CD player, cash, a projector, a diesel card and hairdressing equipment have been stolen.

During the night of 15th to 16th January offenders stole a blue Peugeot vehicle from outside a home in Blakes Close, Lower Brailes.

During the night of 16th to 17th January offenders stole a Renault Clio from a cottage home in Tredington.

Please remain alert, on the lookout for suspicious persons or activity in your area and please report anything of concern to police. Thank you.

*Julie Dale, Watch Co-ordinator*

To report crime or pass on any other information about this message ring 01926 415000.  
Quote the incident number if known.

PREVENT CAR CRIME - DO NOT LEAVE PROPERTY IN YOUR CAR or CAR BOOT  
PREVENT BURGLARY - DO NOT LEAVE DOORS and WINDOWS OPEN

# SHIPSTON HOME NURSING

## EVENTS FOR 2010

### **Saturday 20th February**

#### COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES DAY

At Lower Farm Barn, Great Wolford

10 a.m. To 3 p.m.

£20 to include 3 treatments

Contact: Rebecca Mawle 01608 674929 to book a place

### **Saturday 6th March**

Ginny Davis Productions presents

#### 'TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE KITCHEN'

This show was a sell out at the Edinburgh Fringe 2008

Ginny regularly performs for fund raising organisations; for more information go to  
[www.ginnydavis.com](http://www.ginnydavis.com).

At The Townsend Hall, Shipston on Stour

8 p.m.

£20 to include supper

To buy tickets contact Rebecca Mawle, 01608 674929

### **Saturday 13th March**

#### CHILDREN AND ANIMALS

Concert in St. Laurence's Church, LIGHTHORNE

7 p.m. for 7.30 prompt start

£7.50 to include a glass of wine and nibbles

Contact Jane Rigby, 01926 651420

### **Wednesday 14th April**

#### NEARLY NEW CLOTHES SALE

Townsend Hall, Shipston

10.00am to 3.00pm

Entrance £2 to include coffee/biscuits

If you would like to sell your clothes please call Rebecca 01608 674929 to book

### **Thursday 29th April**

#### FASHION SHOW AT ALSCOT PARK

Domino, Merino and Justina

By kind permission of Emma Holman-West

7.30 p.m.

£30 to include Champagne and Canapés

For tickets contact Rebecca Mawle, 01608 674929 or Domino, 01789 204889

# NOTES OF A MEETING OF OXHILL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 12TH JANUARY 2010 AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Apologies were received from Grenville Moore. All others Councillors were present.

## **MATTERS DISCUSSED**

### **Planning**

Application for single storey extension at Clermont was returned with no objection.

### **Finance**

Precept Year 2010/201

Expenditure for this period was discussed. Established charges (insurance, internal & external audits, clerk's expenses), grants towards mowing the churchyard and the grass by the Village Hall, were taken into account. Funding of the Oxhill News, First Ambulance Responder insurance for medical kit, and request from the Village Hall for provision of kitchen shelving and storage was also included. This year is the Parish Council Elections and the cost of such an election for Oxhill would be £600, £100 if uncontested. This election expense has to be available for payment, if necessary. Therefore a precept of £2500 was agreed, which is in line with last year.

The Village Hall was granted £200 towards the cost of mowing during the 2009 season, and this was paid.

### **Help those less able**

We should all be aware of any less able members of the village who need our help, especially in bad weather when getting about is difficult. Just to make contact can be very reassuring. Thank you to Mike and Barbara Shepard who did many circuits of the village checking if everyone was ok.

### **Re-cycling scheme**

Additional items that we can now be put in our Blue Lid bins include:

Clean Aluminium Foil

Clean yoghurt pots and margarine tubs

Clean plastic food containers.

NOT cling film or carrier bags.

### **Highways**

With our changing climate and more flooding occurring, the Highways Department will be asked if they can provide better road drainage along Main Street to take care of excess water running off higher ground and causing flooding down side lanes.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 9th March 2010 at 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

*Angela Kean, Clerk*

## VILLAGE HISTORY

### “And the Walls came Tumbling Down”

Mrs June Marvin has kindly lent me a book published in 1924 called *Unknown Warwickshire* by Mary Dormer Harris, which gives insights into Oxhill shortly after the First World War. The writer loves the village, which in her romantic style she calls “an enchanted land”, but acknowledges too of a sense of decay, and depopulation. Besides its quiet beauty, Oxhill is also “a dying land”. She talks to a former resident, who still returns to help with haymaking each year. He speaks of about thirty cottages that have fallen down in his lifetime, orchards not renewed, arable fields allowed to “tumble down” to grass, and the young of the village leaving to find work elsewhere.

Emigration, the death toll of the War, and the import of cheaper corn from Canada had hit English farming hard, and cottages lay abandoned. A thatched cottage soon decays, and becomes a ruin. Thirty cottages seems at first surprising, but we should bear in mind that these were often built in rows of five or six, providing only one-up, one-down accommodation. There was such a row behind Elmville, in an alleyway that ran between Gilks Lane and Blackford Way. This row was decaying by 1905 - it is several units shorter on the Ordnance Survey of 1905 than in that of 1886. (As an aside, Blackford Way, the modern name, was described as “Hunt’s End” in the 1891 census, after a resident, and as “Manor House Lane” in 1901 - the lane formerly going on to the Manor. Lane names were not then fixed: these are descriptions rather than titles.) That same lane had 11 dwellings listed in the 1891 census: 7 in 1901. There are 5 now.

Fern Cottage, Main Street was built on the site of former cottages, and the roadside buildings now part of Fellows House and The Old House once formed five more. (These were long unoccupied - Mrs Colyer remembers the one being used for Sunday School in her childhood being so run down, she was scared that something would fall on her!) Next to the Peacock were two rows comprising seven cottages, which gradually fell into dereliction. Two cottages once stood on the site of Amberway, Main Street. The 1886 Ordnance Survey map shows buildings in the orchard next to the Malt House which are subdivided much like a row of cottages: these were gone by the time of the 1905 edition. A cottage behind the Sett referred to as Thackwell’s Lone Cottage has left no trace now. The censuses of 1881, 1891, and 1901 report uninhabited cottages numbering 15, 21 and 16 respectively. Some of these represent the casualties I have listed; some will have been later reoccupied, others left to wind and weather.

The Oxhill man to whom the author spoke thought there was no hope for the area unless the land was fully cultivated again, and in some ways his village has died. Agriculture is no longer the main employer, and most people work in surrounding towns. More houses have sprung up, but at the expense of the orchards that he valued. But although a less rural village, the spirit of the place lives on. If talk of enchantment seems a little strong, it is still a good place to live.

*Ann Hale*

## WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

### ***February***

Tuesday 2nd		Blue & Green recycling bin collection The Peacock- Story Telling evening
Wednesday 3rd	10.30	The Peacock - Village Coffee Morning
Saturday 6th	10 - 4	Shipston High School - Flood defence exhibition
Sunday 7th	8.00	The Peacock - Charity Quiz night
Monday 8th		The Peacock - Guest Chef night
Tuesday 9th		Grey landfill bin collection
Friday 12th	10.15	Weekday Walkers - see inside
Tuesday 16th		Blue & Green recycling bin collection
	10.00	Village Hall - Mobile Library
Wednesday 17th	12.30	The Peacock - Village Lunch
Thursday 18th	7.30	Village Hall - Garden Club: Roger Pringle - Tudor Gardens
Saturday 20th	10 - 3	Great Wolford - SHN complementary therapies day
Sunday 21st	23.59	Copy deadline for the News
Monday 22nd		The Peacock - Guest Chef night
Tuesday 23rd		Grey landfill bin collection
Friday 26th	9.45	Weekday Walkers - see inside

### ***March***

Friday 5th	7.30	Village Hall - Indian evening
Saturday 6th	8.00	Townsend Hall, Shipston - SHN production
Tuesday 9th	8.00	Village Hall - Parish Council meeting
Saturday 13th	9.30	Old Free School, Brailes - Introduction to beekeeping
	7.00	Lighthorne Church - SHN concert
Thursday 18th	7.30	Village Hall - Garden Club AGM

### ***April***

Wednesday 14th	10 - 3	Townsend Hall, Shipston - SHN clothes sale
Thursday 29th	7.30	Alscot Park - SHN fashion show

### **ACCIDENT and MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

**FIRST CALL 999**

**THEN CALL**

Ambulance Responders

**MICK & BARBARA SHEPARD**

**07977149317 Mobile / 01295680644 Home**

**3, The Leys, Oxhill, Warwick, CV350QX**